

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 22, 2018 at 7pm at the Calais Town Offices

Present: Denise Wheeler (Chair), John Brabant (Vice Chair), Rose Pelchuck (Member), Sharon Winn Fannon (Member), Clif Emmons (Member), Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Jerome Lipani (ORCA), John McCullough, Scott Bassage, Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner), David Shütz, Dorothy Naylor, Rick Kehne, Helena Kehne, Scott Thompson, Greg Pelchuck, Ann Wheelock, Ernie Parrish

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Public Comment: Scott Bassage commented that the Historic Preservation Commission is looking into a 2019 Historic Preservation Grant to process Adamant as a National Historic District and reported that the process in East Calais is being received very well.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: The Chair warned that the Board may not get to items number nine and ten. She also moved the Green Line Builders portion of the agenda to first.
4. Town Hall Renovation Estimate: Ernie Parrish from Green Line Builders attended to present an estimate for renovation of the Town Hall. He reviewed each item that was changed or removed from this version of the proposal, which has been approved by the State Historic Preservation Commission. John McCullough reported that there was a savings in fire code doors not needed (for example, on bathroom doors). He clarified that there is not a contingency fund for the building; the Committee expects the entirety of the money projected to be spent on the work. Ernie and the Board discussed cost savings options on items such as volunteer painting. The Chair stated that the priority for completion is the downstairs, which will be utilized as soon as possible for municipal space. John McCullough stated that the upstairs will be usable if not finished. The Change of Use Permit will be worked on through the winter with the DRB. Ernie reviewed details on the insulation materials and installation. Denise Wheeler made a motion to approve the 9/26/18 Green Line Builders proposal, sum total amount \$266,000, to approve the financing of that project with the change in the estimate reflected as of 10/18/18 (written in pen and ink by Donna Fitch, changed from \$264,309.50). Sharon Winn Fannon amended the original motion to include “as informed by Donna Fitch’s 10/19/2018 memo showing the budget being within future estimated expenses.” Denise Wheeler seconded the amended motion. The original motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
Clif Emmons noted that some of the savings the Town is realizing in this quote are thanks to the tireless pro bono work that John McCullough has contributed to this project. The Selectboard and John McCullough added their appreciation to Road Commissioner Alfred Larrabee and the road crew for their efforts and contributions without which the project could not be possible. They agreed that the Town Hall renovation has been a true team effort.

5. Updates/Reports:

- a) Road Commissioner and Operations Manager: The Operations Manager was not in attendance.
- i) Consider FY 20 preliminary budget: The Road Commissioner and Selectboard reviewed in detail the FY20 Proposed Highway Budget spreadsheet. He reported that a new condition of the general permit requires stone lining, and this is requiring more stone than needed before; he suggested adding a line item for stone that reflects this new requirement. The Board and Road Commissioner discussed increases in roadside mowing and guardrails (grants no longer cover weathered steel). The Chair asked the Road Commissioner to consider budgeting for merit increases alongside the 2% increase for salary and to include the Operations Manager salary in the Highway budget (it was later confirmed that this salary was in fact already included in the Highway wages line item). Discussion included budgeting for fuel (new trucks require “urea” additive); equipment purchase and loans (this includes the new truck payment); salt (there is cost for the additional solution being used on County Road). Follow up is needed to check on the line items for supplies, computer and trash removal categories. The Road Commissioner clarified that Green Up Day tires removed are paid through a grant, but illegally dumped tires do need to be removed at other times of the year. The Road Commissioner will investigate numbers on a used tractor and mower in consideration of a warned item; the Board discussed how the Town owning a mower may be utilized for roadside and invasive mowing. The Chair will speak with the Operations Manager about the highway laptop repair.
The Road Commissioner updated the Board regarding the Jack Hill Road project and upcoming replacement of guardrails.
- b) Treasurer: An update from the Treasurer was not needed.
- c) Town Clerk: An update from the Town Clerk was not needed.
- d) Town Hall Renovation Committee: This item was addressed at the first item of the meeting.

6. Town Attorney Engagement Letter: The Town Attorney suggested returning to using an hourly rate rather than a quarterly retainer as he is not needed often enough to justify the quarterly retainer; he had just refunded the town \$1300 for hours not used. Rose Pelchuck moved to authorize the chair to sign the renewed letter of engagement with Jim Barlow, dated October 18, 2018. Clif Emmons seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

7. Budget/Town Report Items:

- a) Poplar Hill Cemetery (PHC): The PHC Commission will be meeting with the East Montpelier Selectboard. The Board decided on having the PHC Commission’s funds being included as a warned article in the town report; they would be seeking \$1500 from each town to cover their annual costs of \$3000.
- b) Oct. 29 Selectboard Meeting: The Chair reported that the following will be included in the 10/29 meeting: Woodbury Volunteer Fire District, Historic Preservation Commission, Cemetery Commission, and the first draft of an office budget.

8. Act 46 Update – Fighting Forced Mergers: Members of the Calais School Board attended to update the Selectboard on the forced merger situation. Dot Naylor explained how the

incredibly (and unprecedented) short time frame laid out by the state for the merger to have been accomplished makes the work of the board very fast-paced. The appeal that is being filed has the potential to stop this process; in the meantime, they are preparing with articles of agreement and other complex issues, so they have a working system in case they do have to merge. Rick Kehne spoke to the issue of an equitable debt solution to the bonded debt. He and Scott Thompson explained that the estimate of a 4% increase for Calais is based on an AOE analysis; in fact, Calais would be paying 7.5 cents more, Worcester 7.9 cents more; whatever else happens, Calais and Worcester will for fourteen more years be paying roughly 15 cents more on their tax rates than East Montpelier (than they would have without the merger). They discussed the lack of understanding of the East Montpelier School Board in the financial calculations on this issue. Discussion included the quality of the elementary schools that support the strength of U-32, Rep. Janet Ancel's comments on the issue and a go-fund-me campaign to fund the appeal.

- a) Consideration of letter in support of appeal: Denise Wheeler made a motion for the Selectboard to vote in favor of becoming a plaintiff in the class action appeal in superior court opposing forced school mergers by the Vermont Board of Education; John Brabant seconded. The motion was voted on and passed 5-0.
9. John Brabant commented that the school building deed is in the name of the Town, and in the case of forced merger, the state would force the Town to surrender a Town owned building. The School Board and Selectboard commented on their pride in being part of this work.
10. The groups discussed the implications to jobs such as additional superintendents and teacher reduction because of the merger, and the boards' efforts to keep a pulse on the community's expectations.
- a) Consideration of minimal donation to legal defense fund: Based on further information, the school board said that they are trying to accomplish funding the legal defense without any additional school or town tax money at this point.
11. Consideration of "draft" road naming policy: Due to time restraints, this item was tabled until a subsequent meeting.
12. Consideration of "draft" credit card policy: Due to time restraints, this item was tabled until a subsequent meeting.
13. Chair update, projects, etc.:
 - Early voting in Calais is reported as "brisk" and Olivia Gay is working on Nov. 5 election day poll worker volunteer sign ups.
 - There is a site visit by the Army Corp of Engineers at Poplar Hill Cemetery on Tuesday.
 - Quotes have been received for printing of the town reports; Jet Services in Berlin came back with the best price, saving approx. \$1,000 on the cost for printing.
 - Clif Emmons has done an extensive amount of research in investigating a phone system for the Town Office; he found an option that is expected to be less than \$700, including activation, for a multi-line system. This would also allow the Town Office staff to transfer calls to the Town Garage and Town Hall and for staff to access the system remotely during hours the office is closed. Compatibility with headsets will allow busy office activity to not interrupt staff on the phone. Office staff is very excited about this improvement and

installation will be in the next few weeks.

14. Review and approve minutes, warrants

- a) The Board reviewed the invoices and orders were processed for payment.
- b) Approval of the 10/15/2018 minutes was tabled until a subsequent meeting.

15. Executive Session for Personnel Matters: Denise Wheeler made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:43 pm per 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(2) - the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options. The Chair invited Scott Bassage and Greg Pelchuck to join the Board. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. Scott Bassage and Greg Pelchuck left Executive Session and the Selectboard continued another matter. Regular session resumed at 9:50 pm. The Chair had nothing to report publicly.

16. Other business/old business/new business: None.

17. Adjournment: John Brabant made a motion to adjourn at 9:55 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Date: 10/23/2018 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Selectboard at the 11/5/2018 meeting

Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=11M9tDd-w7AcyEPngPag9fP3AN4zSZI-y>